



ORANG REPATRIATION. A Thai officer offers peanuts to Cola, a 10-year-old female orangutan, who is seen in a cage at Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok, Thailand. Wildlife authorities in Thailand repatriated two orangutans, Cola and seven-year-old Giant, to their native habitats in Indonesia in a collaborative effort to combat the illicit wildlife trade. (AP Photo/Sakchai Lalit)

Thailand returns orangutans to their Indonesian homeland

By **Busaba Sivasomboon**
The Associated Press

BANGKOK — Wildlife authorities in Thailand sent two orangutans back to Indonesia as part of a collaborative effort to combat illicit wildlife trade.

Ten-year-old female Cola and seven-year-old male Giant were transported from wildlife sanctuaries in the western province of Ratchaburi to Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport, where they were put on a plane to Jakarta.

Giant was smuggled into Thailand in 2014, while Cola was born in a breeding center to two smuggled orangutans which were sent back to Indonesia several years ago, according to Thailand's Department of National Park, Wildlife, and Plant Conservation. Police found Giant when they stopped and searched a bus heading from the southern border area to Bangkok, it said.

Sixty-seven orangutans have been sent back to Indonesia in three previous batches, and more are expected to go back this year, the agency said.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species — CITES — prohibits international trade in orangutans. They are found only in the forests of Sumatra and Borneo but their habitat is shrinking due to the growth of agricultural land use, making them more vulnerable to poaching. The International Union for Conservation of Nature, the global authority on the status of the natural world, lists orangutans as critically endangered.

Orangutans are often sold into the pet trade and for display in zoos and other attractions.

"The return of these orangutans will send a very strong message to the criminals responsible for the smuggling of animals across countries that both

governments will act decisively," Indonesian diplomat Dicky Komar said at the handover ceremony at the airport.

Cola will be sent to a wildlife rehabilitation center in East Kalimantan, while Giant will stay in an animal nursery center in Sumatra. Giant has to spend the rest of his life in a nursery due to having had his hands amputated, making it hard for him to fend for himself. Veterinarians carried out the operation to save his life after he was bitten by some fierce monkeys. Officials say chances are good that Cola can be returned to the wild.

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Pakistan study blames HIV outbreak in kids on bad healthcare

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mitted to children as a result of healthcare providers using contaminated needles and blood products," said the statement.

"Pakistan has experienced a series of HIV outbreaks over the past two decades, but we've never before seen this many young children infected or so many health facilities involved," said Dr Fatima Mir from The Aga Khan University in Karachi, the Sindh provincial capital, one of the authors of the study quoted in the statement.

About 70% of Pakistan's 220 million people use the private healthcare sector, which is mostly unregulated and rarely monitored for cleanliness and safety. Among many Pakistanis, popular belief holds that intravenous or intramuscular injections are more effective than medicine taken by mouth, which has increased the use of syringes across the country — and the likelihood of dirty needles being used.

In the immediate aftermath of the HIV outbreak in Ratodero, the government did act quickly, closing three blood banks as well as 300 clinics run by untrained medical staff, the statement said.

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